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# Beyond Performance

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**Jan Fabre**

**Texts on his theatre-work**

**Kaaithater / Theater Am Turm**

## **Beyond Performance; re Jan Fabre**

Curtis L. Carter

The terms "performance" and "theater" historically have been linked so that performance is what we expect to see in the theater, and performing is what we believe actors of the theater do. Herbert Blau's remarks in a recent issue of 'Discourse' devoted to performance, underscore this point: "There was a time, in a simpler world than this, when if you thought about performance you were thinking about the theater, focused upon the actor developing a character from a dramatic text, with more or less verisimilitude of psychological realism."<sup>1</sup> However, with the emergence over the past forty years of performance art, which has variously represented itself as anti-art and also in opposition to past and current theater practices, performance art has become recognized as a medium in its own right. Consequently, the relation of performance to theater is less certain than it was in the beginning. Are the differences arising between theater and performance art essentially about differing practices, centering for instance, on the use of trained actors to interpret a character in a text? Performance artists have in the past made works by using their own bodily actions under the guidance of a concept, and without the help of acting skills. Similarly performance artists rejected directing and rehearsals and frequently presented their works outside the theater: in galleries, clubs, or even in the streets. Or are ideological differences encompassing a desire to reform institutionalized theater the central issue?

Perhaps the immediate origins of performance art can be traced to the action paintings of artists such as Jackson Pollock and others whose explorations with new forms of painting included the act of performing a painting. As is well known, more exaggerated anti-art happenings followed. Then came solo performances by artists such as Vito Acconci,



Chris Burden, Valie Export, Rachel Rosenthal and others in the seventies and eighties. If many of them performed solo, others such as Richard Forman and Tadeusz Kantor developed ensemble works that fall somewhere near the borders of performance art and theater. Frequently such works harkened back to the dada and futurist anti-art ideas of earlier generations of artists and were often conceptual as opposed to aesthetically based works. At times, the term performance art has embraced events consisting essentially of exhibitionist personalities acting out their fantasies or delusions in more or less structured situations; in other instances the performances are based on highly original performance ideas.

Today, it is not uncommon to refer to performance art in the past tense as if it were no longer a significant force, or at least to question the extent to which it can continue to function as a viable, experimental, anti-art force given the changing climate that has emerged in the eighties and nineties. It cannot be said that performance art has ceased to exist, for senior artists such as Rachel Rosenthal continue to perform, and new performance artists continue to emerge. For the most part the current performances are centered on political and social issues: Rosenthal's ecological themes, Tim Miller's focus on male sexuality, Adrian Piper's African-American and Guillermo Gomez-Peña and Coco Fusco's Mexican-American works both of which address multi-cultural issues.

This is not to say that political and social themes were absent from earlier works of performance art. However, it appears that performance artists of today are less and less self-reflexive about the nature of art itself or of the artist. Perhaps this is in part a sign of the decline in ideological strife of the eighties which flowed from neo-Marxist, neo-Freudian, Post-Structuralist theory and criticism and the debates concerning modernism within the arts community. Or perhaps it is the near apocalyptic urgency of our times that compels artists to address major social and ecological concerns that affect our very being and the future survival of the world.

The circumstances affecting the status of performance art today may warrant rethinking its relationship to theater. As performance art adopts dramatic staged effects and other staples of vocabulary of theater,

it has in part been embraced by the theater that it once opposed and perhaps can now be considered as a genre of experimental theater in its own right. Performance art now includes practitioners who employ acting skills as well as participants who continue to rely on untrained bodily actions to create their works. Further, as elements of popular culture are incorporated into performances and theater audiences are in search of more excitement than is available in the conventional theater, audiences for performance art have expanded. In some instances attending performance events has become *chic*, embraced by theater audiences extending beyond a small but loyal inner circle where it began, and closer to mainstream theater. It is doubtful that such audiences distinguish performance from theater in the way that the performance art practitioners in their prior stages might have desired. Hence the earlier opposition of performance and theater seems to have subsided as the two have come into closer proximity.

In the context of the current discourse on performance and theater noted above, I hope to provide some insight into Jan Fabre's work and his place in the performing arts of the past decade, and also to shed some light on the current and future state of the relation of performance to theater. In so framing the discussion, I am aware that few artists appreciate having their work categorized under broad concepts such as performance or theater. While such concepts may contribute to the clarity of discourse, they may not do justice to the distinctive features of the artist's work. This will apply especially to the work of Fabre who, from the beginning, has fiercely insisted on the freedom to express his own concepts as independently as possible from any constraints. In an interview for the exhibition catalogue 'Homo Fabre' (1981), Fabre declares: "To me there are no limits in any medium (...) I want to work with all possible media and in such a way I do not have to be the victim of limitations (...) I do not want to be a painter, nor a performer, or a writer (...) I simply want to do what I like".<sup>2</sup>

Although his own early works made in 1980-81 included live solo performances, he had at that time already become skeptical about the medium of performance art. In the previously mentioned interview Fabre stated: "In the beginning I saw something in the medium of performance (...) Performance is something there was a need for at a certain time,

in an evolution, but nowadays it belongs to the past".<sup>3</sup> He particularly questioned the practice of certain artists who, capitalizing on the growing popularity of performance, kept repeating the same performances over and over at various festivals. His solution was to make a series of non-repeated live solo performances dealing essentially with issues relating to art and the concept of an artist.

I first became aware of Fabre's work in 1980 when he was creating and performing these solo performances. The first series of three pieces was about money or rather about art and money, and they were performed in Antwerp and Ghent during 1979-1980.

The first piece I saw was 'Money (art) in Culture' (summer of 1980), performed in Ghent in the back of an old tavern for an international conference of aestheticians. The audience was seated or standing in the small space very close to where Fabre was making the work. The artist had collected in advance from the audience and the conference sponsors several hundred dollars worth of currency from the different nations - Belgium, The Netherlands, The U.S.A., Australia, Denmark, Poland, and others. In the beginning he distributed money to the audience members, then collected the money and arranged it on a yard square of white paper located on the floor, and formed the word "art" using the money. He and members of the audience together arranged the money again on the paper, which Fabre had covered with paste. Fabre meanwhile placed a portion of the currency in a bucket and set fire to it, as the audience registered audible shock and discomfort. A sufficient amount of money (not all as the artist also needed to be paid) to generate a bright flame that rose above the top rim of the bucket. Fabre then poured the ashes from the bucket onto the white paper covered with cash and inscribed on it the word "culture". He then lifted up the finished work and auctioned off the piece to who else but a philosopher, thus completing the performance. The piece obviously tested the tolerance of the audience concerning the powerful symbolism that money carries as it represents *not only* public authority and power (it is against the law to burn currency in most countries), but also is valued for its contributions to the necessities and pleasures of life. Literally turning money into art, also something to be valued by the audience for its own symbolism and status, did not in this instance entirely appease the audience. As an artist, however, Fabre also understood the love-hate relationship that can exist between himself and

money. He understood that when a fire is lit with money, whether in the soul or in the bucket, it causes risks for the artist and unpredictable consequences. Without some money an artist cannot produce art.

On the other hand, money can compromise or even corrupt the artmaking processes and cultural systems of the artworld forcing the artist or institution to choose between uncompromising and challenging art and art that appeases or merely entertains the audience.

I invited Fabre to the U.S.A. in the fall of 1980 where he subsequently presented three solo performances in Milwaukee, as well as additional works in New York and Saint Louis. The Milwaukee pieces included 'Sea Salt of the Fields', performed in an aesthetics classroom at Marquette University, 'After Art', performed for the Annual Conference of the American Society for aesthetics, and 'Creative Hitler Act', performed in a lecture hall at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, each lasting about 45 minutes and focusing on issues concerning the artist and the art world.<sup>4</sup>

'Sea Salt of the Fields' is an homage to Marcel Duchamp, who was undoubtedly a mentor for the young Fabre, and at the same time provides an occasion to explore with the audience and himself the complexities and contradictions that the life of an artist might embrace. Duchamp is presented in this work as an anti-artist "hero" who challenged the limits of classical art with innovative conceptual works and as a betrayer of ideals who blatantly exploited the commercial prospects of his readymades.

Both 'After Art' and 'Creative Hitler Act' concern the artist's ego.

'Creative Hitler Act' affirms that every artist is in part a dictator in the sense that an artist must be strong in his ideas, emotions and will.

In the course of the piece Fabre tramples, then rearranges books of philosophy, art, and other subjects tearing out pages in the process. Random lines from the various books fill a blackboard; these lines are erased with a sponge to form the word "creative". Subsequently the books are rearranged to form the words "creative art", and the piece concludes with applause after which the artist responds with a sheep-like baah, baah. If this piece can be seen as an expression of the aggressive strident self of the artist, 'After Art' is more introspective, more probing of the artist's ego. Actions include undressing, changing from blue Levi street clothes to white, drawing of an outline of the sort used by police to mark the site of

a corpse, cutting fingers and mixing blood into water (later offered to an audience member), covering face and hair with shaving cream, writing with shaving cream the word “smart”, repeated returns to a mirror for reflection on his image, shaving, washing of feet, pacing, and assuming various poses including a harlequin image. After each meditation at the mirror, a single word, “one”, then “two”, on through the number thirteen was shouted out in drill-sergeant tone.

These early works by Fabre exemplify some of the characteristics of other performance artists working at the time. Contrary to Aristotle in the ‘Poetics’, who counsels the makers of theater to avoid the actions of real life, they incorporate *real life actions*. There was no costume except the street clothes of the artist, no make up, and no verbal script as such which had to be interpreted. Fabre provided the concept, was self-directed, and performed solo. There were props - salt, shaving cream, mirror, books - which were incorporated into the act. The settings required no special conditions, and varied widely. Drawings made with salt, shaving cream, or chalk were included in the pieces that I saw, thus establishing a possible link with Fabre’s visual arts training.

In Fabre’s solo pieces, the concept is worked out in detail prior to the event, thus eliminating any sense of improvisation. Yet the absence of the conventions that an actor relies upon provides a built in sense of risk, increasing the possibility of the unexpected happening. Since the works are essentially unrehearsed and are not repeated, there is no certainty as to the outcome of any particular performance. The pieces are both engaging and frustrating. From the artist’s point of view, what we see when we see such a performance is the artist at work doing “important” things with his body in a certain place. His movements are specific to the development of the work being undertaken, just as the movements of a street sweeper would be specific to that type of work.

Yet the gathering together of an audience in a space to observe and participate in the event already sets it apart from other types of work.

In this instance, the audience is asked to pay close attention to the *real life movements* and to explore their potential from a new perspective.

For those who were willing to suspend prior notions of what to expect in art, such experiences might prove to be fruitful. For many, however, the boring repetitions of a performer’s task specific walkings and doings of the sort noted above were puzzling and even frustrating. Even twelve years later I find that people who watch the videos of ‘Sea Salt of the



Fields' and 'After Art' are ambivalent in their responses. Some are intrigued but most are reluctant to accept the performances as art. Those responses of audiences, who did not think of his performances as art, were in part as Fabre intended. He did not choose to think of himself as an artist as such, but rather as a creative person who had elected to work in a certain way. His own scepticism about the validity of performance art and his desire to move on to more ambitious work, led in the direction of grander theater pieces. These early solo pieces had served him well in that they provided a vehicle to work out the terms of his future vocation as artist and also led the foundations for elements that would later be adapted in the larger theater pieces.

The place of performance in Fabre's development, as a transitional mode in which he works out certain issues relating to his own future development, may suggest something about the role of performance itself. As a genre it is essentially unstable, transitional, in between visual art and theater. For Fabre, and perhaps for others as well, performance also functions as a form of anti-art. Recall for instance that he insists on complete freedom from past developments, and he questions the special place apart from other "workers" that artists sometimes presume.

For him creativity can be realized by even the lowliest of human actions such as sweeping the street, and thus the actions of artist and its processes are not unique or to be set apart on a pedestal. However, anti-art 'presupposes as its antecedent the practices of art with a history and tradition. Anti-art itself can be thought of as a stage in a dialectic, as Hegel might have said, where the past is uprooted and refigured in order to establish new developments of the arts. Although we tend to date this movement to the dadaist and surrealist artists of the 1920s and 1930s, it is likely that every major change in the arts has something of an anti-art component associated with it.

Fabre's movement toward the theater began with 'Theater Spelled with a K is a Tomcat' (1981), which I saw at Theater X's Black Box in Milwaukee in 1981.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the previous solo pieces this work had at least the beginnings of a theatrical structure. There were sketches of four players: an author busy at his typewriter situated above the action, a mythological demon, and two lovers whose kinetic sexual struggles in pursuit of each other form the central actions of the piece. There is no plot but a repetition of episodes around a common theme. The structure depends

on a dialogue of actions similar to the lines of horizontal waves rising and receding as the intensity build and subside rather than character development, although there is some of this. Female and male roles are all played by males, and male-female characters and roles are constantly changing throughout the performance. The verbal text, if it could be called such, consisted of aggressive monosyllabic utterances of such words as “drugs, sex, and violence” uttered at a staccato pace.

This work did include some acting (the author at his typewriter) as well as real physical and psychological violence. Players poke with sharp sticks, kick and stomp, and throw salt and pepper into the eyes.

Male and female roles vie for dominance and conquest. Performers are used as objects who experience real violence and real pain rather than simulated violence of the conventional theater. Actual physical threat is thus substituted for verbal, logical assault. Hence they experience real discomfort during the course of the action. The Milwaukee performance is particularly notable in my memory as it resulted in charges by the Milwaukee police against two of the players for violations of city ordinances relating to nudity and lewd behavior and a quick exit by the players after a court appearance.

In launching ‘Theater Spelled With a K is a Tomcat’ Fabre has moved beyond performance and toward the theater. If Fabre’s words can be believed, his move to the theater is in part motivated by a personal desire to escape the isolation of solo work and begin to work more closely with other people. But it is also grounded in his dissatisfaction with performance art. “I had been spending some time doing performance-art (...), but to be quite honest, I hated all that artificial and would-be intellectual stuff. One big lie. The theater is also a lie, of course, but it is more real.”<sup>6</sup> Perhaps an even stronger factor in Fabre’s migration towards theater is a desire to work “within the enemy’s camp”. In an interview with Leo Van Damme in 1984, Fabre declares his antipathy toward the institutions of the art world including the theater and the art gallery which he, along with many other artists, perceives as a threat to “the authenticity and credibility of art”. In effect it is Fabre’s intent at this time to infiltrate the theater in order to engage in subversive activities aimed at unmasking the conventions of the theater and confronting its essentially bourgeois audiences in order to evoke a change of outlook towards establishing a social climate receptive to a more humane art, and presumably a more humane society. Says Fabre: “This remains utopian, of course, but

what I really want to do is to produce an exhibition or a play in such a way that it ruins the institution in question (...) I consider these institutions as the enemy's camp where real damage can be done."<sup>7</sup>

The first major theater piece, where Fabre had had the opportunity to begin his infiltration into theater, was his eight hour marathon, 'This is Theater Like It Was To Be Expected and Foreseen' in 1983.

This extraordinary work was indeed sparse in theatrical conventions. Lighting for instance consisted of candles, light from a film projector, and a motley array of floor lamps assembled from junk shops, but used to create a brilliant theatrical effect. The sparse set of the Skylight Theater performance in Milwaukee included a circle of folding chairs, sometimes arranged in rows and meat hooks hanging above. The time structure of eight hours was modelled after an eight hour working day, broken by episodic segments which employed dialogue in Dutch, German, French, and English, choreography, pop music, film - and most especially the bodies, emotions, and minds of the eight performers - to examine in exhaustive detail the trivial actions of ordinary life such as running in place, dressing and undressing, and fidgeting as well as more exotic actions such as a striptease by actress Renata Vets. The striptease, performed once for her "customer" and again for herself was an extraordinary revelation of a self layed bare before the theater audience. It was but one of a long and richly punctuated series of engaging vignettes.

Perhaps the most memorable of all was a procession of "blind" figures led by birds on a string accompanied by a piercing siren moving toward a single light that casts shadows, thus heightens the dramatic tension.

It was for a moment an experience of terror reminiscent of a World War II air raid. The eight performers undergo on the stage real aggression, tiredness, frustration, anger, and other states of body and mind from real life. The aim was to foster genuine rather than simulated interaction between the eight players, only one of whom was an actress. The experiences occurring on the stage were the outcome of a rigorous working period of several months first in Herentals (Belgium) and later in Antwerp where the group worked through all aspects of the piece.

The text and other parts of the production including decisions about costumes, choreography, film, and music were developed in part from interactive processes taking place among members of the project, including the costumier, choreographer, film maker, and Fabre. Parts of conversations taped in the sessions are heard in the finished piece.<sup>8</sup>

'Theater Like It was to be Expected and Foreseen' was the first of a series of large scale theater pieces and operas which have been presented during the period from 1984 to the present. At least some of these such as 'The Power of Theatrical Madness' continue either directly or indirectly their exploration of the theater by raising issues relating to the nature of the theater itself. This particular work takes up the age old problem of the relation of painting and theater. Reversing Michael Fried's inquiry into the theatricality of painting, where the direction of influence was from theater to painting, Fabre undertakes the transposition of "the medium of painting into the medium of theater", as Emil Hrvatin has suggested.<sup>9</sup> This was not done, however, for the sake of turning the play into a grand pictorial tableau. Rather, taking painting as a source of inspiration for theater suggests a different approach to actions on the stage than is expected. A painting in the classical and romantic figurative styles typically represents actions as suspended in time, or "frozen", in contrast to the temporality of actions on the stage.

Fabre thus projects into the action of the theater the point of view of painting by repeating over and over an action until the actors are physically exhausted. This process in itself is subversive in that repetition of an action typically suggests boredom and sameness. Fabre's practice of repeating an action until it evokes exhaustion, frustration or anger in the players eventually forces the viewer to explore the repetitions searching out their subtle variations and their interrelations, thus forging an alternative context for understanding the work. As Foucault has reminded us, each repetition of a statement, in this instance the repetition of an action in the play, may carry a different identity, requiring that we pay careful attention to what might appear on the surface to be the same action when it in fact carries a different meaning.<sup>10</sup>

A more recent theater work such as 'Sweet Temptations' has continued to adapt the language and practices of "the enemy camp". Extensive dialogue between two scientists - Stephen Hawking and Albert Einstein - about nature and two owls takes place in a wild and crazy world complete with carousing party-goers and a rock band, a world in which even with their brilliance the scientists in their wheel chairs surrounded by nurses and doctors remain helpless to affect the direction of the world. In certain respects this work with its more narrative structure is theatrically more accessible than some of Fabre's theater. Yet the question which is repeated from time to time - "Is this the decade of the end of the

world or just another occasion for another party?" - carries an apocalyptic undertow. Fabre's work must still be considered a threat to many conventional theatergoers if not to the theater itself.

The dance in Fabre's 'Das Glas im Kopf wird vom Glas. The Dance Sections' (1987), where the dancers process ever so slowly under the weight of armour and create their own music from the sounds of the moving armour, places theatrical dance movement under a microscope and forces the dancers and the audience to reconsider the very foundations of the ballet which is an essential part of the traditional theater. The radical implications of Fabre's anti-balletic movement structures for traditional ballet are no less provocative than the other theatrical innovations that he has interjected from within the theater. He strips the dance to its essence and replaces graceful and effortless movement with movement that reveals its effort by showing the dancers hands as bound with ballet slippers that would ordinarily bind the feet. Fabre signals that he intends to reshape this aspect of theater as well. While the twentieth century is well known for its revolutions in theatrical dance, Fabre takes the process one step further.

Fabre's intimate solo pieces, 'Who shall speak my thought...', performed by Marc van Overmeir, and 'Elle était et elle est, même', performed by Els Deceukelier, both during 1992, appear to have made peace with the theater. In sharp contrast to the performance art Fabre created in the 1980s, these pieces are based on earlier literary texts by Fabre, interpreted by the use of acting skills directed in part at creating a character. Indeed they rely upon highly polished acting skills for their effects.

And the experience is very satisfying as a theater event in the conventional sense that the text and the acting have fulfilled the audience's need for an emotionally moving and edifying, if unsettling, experience.

Even the absurd "super rabbit" costume of the actor in 'Who shall speak my thought...' could not offset the powerful theatrical force of this simple but elegant piece. In these last works it appears that Fabre has perhaps moved full circle from performance as it occurs in performance art to performance as theater in the more conventional sense. I would not like to overinterpret this observation, but it is necessary to point out the risk that has been taken. In entering into the enemy's camp, which in this instance is the institutional theater, and adopting the language of

theater that is spoken there, one encounters the possibility that the rebel will in the end be assimilated or even consumed by the very institution that he seeks to destroy or at least reform. Performance art thus, which began as anti-theater, has in effect survived primarily as a form of theater as is evidenced by the fact that performance artists found a need for training to deepen and sustain their art, and by the fact that artists like Fabre who began in performance have gravitated to the theater for the further development of their creativity. Performance art thus has moved in the direction of experimental theater, and the theater in turn relies more than before on the visual-bodily text instead of the spoken word. The reasons may in part be economic in the sense that grand scale ideas require the resources of a larger institution. Fabre's larger theater pieces have long since exceeded the small budgets of the early avant-garde sponsors.

If it is the bourgeois theater that is the enemy, however, there are other concerns. As Herbert Blau has noted, as with the actor so with the spectator: there exist habits of mind derived from the Cartesian-like rationalist frame of the Proscenium stage that shape the practices of performing and the experiences of viewing in the theater, and both can be resistant to change.<sup>11</sup> Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of taste and lifestyles suggests that the bourgeois factions of society mandate certain expectations of their art and theater, as well as their writers and other cultural purveyors, which is to provide emblems of distinction which are at the same time means of denying social reality.<sup>12</sup>

Now at first glance it would be difficult to account for the success of an artist such as Fabre, who by all appearances has for the most part continued to launch substantial challenges to the theater and to the bourgeois values that define to a large degree the expectations surrounding its support. This success is not so surprising however, when we realize that there also exists a substantial affluent "left bank" intellectual and artistic taste with a preference for contemporary work. This group expects the artist to symbolically challenge social reality and the orthodox representations of it in so called bourgeois art.<sup>13</sup> However, the patronage of the institutionalized left bank taste, while purporting to support challenges to social reality, may be no more ready to accept revolutionary changes than their bourgeois cousins. For it too in the end relies upon the same social support system as "the other" bourgeois component of society. It follows that a further step "beyond performance" and toward



the liberation of art is required. At the most general level the task is to realize more fully the value of creativity in “real life”. To do this fully we must challenge the assumption that there must be art at all. The program for this is in part indicated in Fabre’s works. In the early performance art pieces he brought into these works real actions and emotions, as opposed to simulations. His program called for the destructions of the very institutions such as the theater, the gallery, and the critic, that exist to inhibit freedom and maintain walls of separation of creative art from the other actions of life in part because they perpetuate a cultural hierarchy that opposes free, creative art.

Like many others before him Fabre has undoubtedly asked the question, “What does life amount to?” Perhaps he feels, as did Sir James Jeans the astronomer, that “we have tumbled, as though through error, into a universe which by all evidence was not intended for us”.<sup>14</sup> We have the choice of strutting for a tiny moment upon a tiny stage aware of the possibility that everything we have achieved will perish. Or we can undertake a rigorous search for points of contact between ourselves and our surroundings in a broader human and environmental context. And no one can predict with certainty where the search will lead to.

It will take us outside the frame of performance, whether within or outside of theater, and in pursuit of the privileged circumstances of time and place where these points of contact can be found. With this in mind it is fitting to close with a quote from Gertrude Stein: “The business of art is to live the actual present, that is the complete actual present, and to express that complete actual present.”

Editor’s note: the original American spelling of this lecture has been maintained.

1 Herbert Blau: The Prospect Before Us, in: *Discourse* 14:2 (Spring, 1992): 2.

2 Jan Fabre: *Homo Fabere* (Ter Dilt, Gemeente Bornem Cultural Center, Exhibition Catalogue, 9/18-10/7, 1981), 24.

3 Fabre: *Homo Fabere*, 24.

4 See Curtis L. Carter: “Jan Fabre”, *Etcetera* (June 1983): 26-28 for more detailed accounts of the Milwaukee solo works. ‘Creative Hitler Act’ was also performed in Saint Louis in 1980, an exception to Fabre’s practice of making non-repeatable works. Other solo performances presented in the USA during the early eighties included ‘Art as a Gamble, Gamble as a Art’ (1981), performed at the School of Visual Arts in New York, ‘Its Kill or Cure’ (1982) at Franklin Furnace in New York, and ‘T. Art’ (1981) in Saint Louis. There are among approximately 20 solo performances executed by

- Fabre between 1979 and 1982. Between 1976 and 1979 his performances included an additional 9 titles according to the catalogue, "Jan Fabre: Tekeningen, modellen & objecten", PMMK, Oostende 1989.
- 5 'Theatre Spelled With A 'K' is Tomcat' was performed in Milwaukee at Theater X May 11, 12, 1981 by Wil Beckers, Harry Beckers, Stef Gossen and Jan Fabre. On the second night the Milwaukee police vice squad attended the performance and charged Stef Gossen and Harry Becker with disorderly conduct and indecent exposure, respectively. Documents: Municipal Court, City of Milwaukee May 12, 1981, case M-8125206 and M-8125205. See Milwaukee Journal May 13, 14, 15, 18; Milwaukee Sentinel May 12, 15, 16, 28.
  - 6 Jan Fabre, Interview with Leo Van Damme: 'Vrienden', exhibition catalogue, Hasselt Provincial Museum, 1984.
  - 7 Jan Fabre, Interview with Leo Van Damme: "In the Enemy's Camp", in Vrienden.
  - 8 This information is based on an unpublished report on the working process leading to 'This is Theater Like It Was to be Expected and Foreseen' prepared in 1983 by Curtis L. Carter, assisted by Jeroen Heuvel, a member of Fabre's company who performed in the work.
  - 9 Emil Hrvatin: Panoptikunst, in "Jan Fabre: Risbe, Modeli & Objekti", exhibition catalogue, Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 1989, 13.
  - 10 Michel Foucault: The Archaeology of Knowledge. Translated by A. M. Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 101.
  - 11 Herbert Blau: The Prospect Before Us, in: Discourse 14.2, Spring 1992: 2.
  - 12 Pierre Bourdieu: Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1984) 293.
  - 13 Bourdieu, 293.
  - 14 cited in Teilhard de Chardin: The Future of Man.